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at first flush surprise us and titillate our mind. But in the long run they weary us and we begin to long for something less superficial, less surface song-and-dance brush-whacking and we seek a more reposeful craftsmanship, such as will allow us to get beneath the surface and penetrate into the heart and soul of the person portrayed.

When will our public demand from our artists work that is more than merely clever?

Compare the face in this "Portrait of a Man" by Hals with the "Mona Lisa"; notice that the play of mental life is not nearly so powerful as in that marvel of life realization by Leonardo. The upraised hand poorly "flung in" with the brush becomes very disturbing as we gradually get into the picture. This will be apparent to the reader by covering this hand with the thumb.

Hals made a number of these clever pictures and they have all been a source of evil in art. Because those artists who could not draw correctly or were too lazy to do so and preferred to cater to our innate love of flip and dexterity have always found

a justification for painting badly the hands of their portraits, even when the face was fairly well painted, thus attracting the attention of the mind to the hands away from the face, which should not be. How different in this respect is the wonderful portrait of M. Bertin in the Louvre by Ingres where the hands are so wonderfully realized that the mind glides from them and goes to the equally wonderfully realized face; they never draw the attention away from the face because there are no questions to be asked about the incomplete and slurred hands.

We do not ask that our painters paint like Leonardo or any one else. We rather prefer that they should not imitate any one. Let them be themselves! But if they must be "suicides by imitation" as Emerson said, let them at least imitate Leonardo, Rembrandt, Holbein, Velasquez and even Hals—but at their best, not at their worst; imitate them in their truly great works, and not make a fetish of their clever stunts and imitate only those, because, perhaps, they are so easily imitated.

## A TRIVIAL WORK OF ART

### "PORTRAIT OF AN OLD MAN," BY DENNER

MANY of our readers will perhaps have noticed this picture in the long gallery in the Louvre. It is a work of art which in a mechanical way is a marvel of painting, and

would be a great masterpiece—if the mere realistic copying of wrinkles, a stubbled beard and a fur collar were the highest aims in a portrait. But the work is so evidently a patient, mechanical copying the trivial side of a studio model, it is so much like a realistic still-life painting expressive of nothing but the superficial things—wrinkles and a beard with every hair put in with marvelous precision and patience—that it seems trivial in spite of being in some ways remarkable as mere painting.

The reason why we give this work only our wonderment and not even our admiration is because it lacks that indefinable something called "life." And this results from its lack of perfect drawing. When we look at it carefully we will notice that the eyes are too far apart and look in different directions and that the ear is set back too far. By covering the ear with the thumb you will find the face already more life-like.

Evidently Denner, like so many other artists, could draw an ear by itself marvelously well. But he could not draw it—in relation to the whole head. He could paint fur and every other detail in a marvelously detailed way, but when it came to drawing or painting the whole head with everything in its place, by properly constructing it he made mistakes by sacrificing the great to the trivial side of his problem. That is why in spite of its many admirable technical qualities this work is trivial.



"PORTRAIT OF AN OLD MAN" BY DENNER  
*A Trivial Work of Art.*